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The Season Ticket, Fall 1999

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The Season Ticket

Columbia College Theater Department

Fall 1999

Inside this edition of
The Season Ticket...



- Get the scoop on ED, the new Administrative Assistant
- Look inside Alive #3 with Chicago Moving Company's Nana Shineflug
- Have your favorite fairytale re-told with director Estelle Spector's Into the Woods
- Director Jeff Ginsberg gives you an RX for The Waiting Room
- And Even More fun then you expected!!

A Big Welcome to Ed Mazzocco!!!!!!!!!!

This semester, longtime Theater Department General Manager, Jennie Halliday is stepping down and moving back to her home in New Zealand with MFA in film in hand. As much as we hate seeing Jennie leave, we know we are in safe hands with the new Administrative Assistant, Ed Mazzocco, who is taking her place. He has worked at Columbia since 1988, but where has he been?

Ed has years of student service experience here at Columbia including five years in records, four years in admissions, and he came to us directly from the bursar's office, where he spent the last two years. This man knows Columbia inside and out. "I look forward to being in an academic department, even with big shoes to fill in terms of

reputation and quality from Ms. Halliday," Ed tells us. "Everyone has been so patient and kind to me in my first month here, and I am so impressed that everyone has so much professional experience in the Chicago theater community. And yet everyone is so down to earth."

Ed is a Chicago native, born and bred. In his spare time, he works part time at the Lyric Opera. He is a god father to two nephews and one niece. He has two older sisters and they are all part of a very tightly knit family. So next time you are in the 3rd floor main office, be sure to welcome Ed to the Columbia Theater Department family.

Into the Woods to Estelle Spector's House

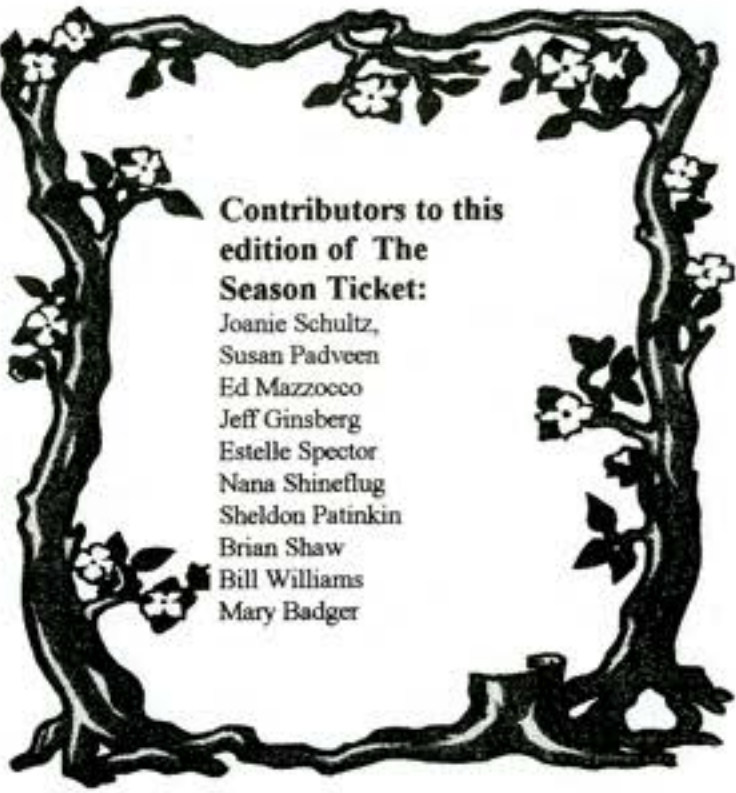
This semester, Columbia College produced *Into the Woods*, a musical based on many of the fairy tales we all heard growing up. This musical, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine, was directed by faculty member Estelle Goodman Spector in the Getz Theater November 11 through November 21. Two other musical theater teachers collaborated with Estelle on this play. Larrance Fingerhut was the musical director for the show, and Laura Thoma did the musical staging. We caught up with Estelle during her busy schedule and got a glimpse of the real meaning behind these tall tales.

Into the Woods ties together the stories of Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Ridinghood, Rapunzel, The Baker and his Wife, and Cinderella, along with the stock characters of the Witch and Giant. Sondheim and Lapine make these characters surprisingly human, and show us the nature of their inner conflicts through a well balanced funny and dramatic script. "I wanted to do this play because of what it teaches us about growing up and our responsibility to ourselves and other people. The lesson of the play is that everything we do has consequences," Estelle tells us, "and I did this show because I think Sondheim is the best writer and composer of the American musical today. This show offers students real, fully-developed characters to indulge in studying and acting, along with complex music and dense lyrics. It is certain to be a learning experience for everyone involved because of the difficulty of the piece."

Another theme of *Into the Woods* is cooperation. As Estelle explains, "These characters are individuals who learn that together they can find all of the pieces of the puzzle and help each other. They only find what they are looking for when they work to-

gether. This is all tied up in one of the final songs, 'No One is Alone,'" and there certainly is a stellar group of designers working together to make this production shine.

Three Designers-In-Residence were responsible for the look of this show. Margaret L. Nelson designed the lights, John Murbach designed the sets, and Francis Maggio designed the costumes. Faculty member David Cromer was the guest artist playing the role of the Narrator and Mysterious Man. The play proved to be both entertaining and thought provoking.



Contributors to this edition of The Season Ticket:

Joanie Schultz,
Susan Padveen
Ed Mazzocco
Jeff Ginsberg
Estelle Spector
Nana Shineflug
Sheldon Patinkin
Brian Shaw
Bill Williams
Mary Badger

Alive #3

The Chicago Moving Company

We kicked off our semester here at Columbia College with a workshop piece that combined the forces of the dance company The Chicago Moving Company with the talents of many of our own theater department students. The production, titled *Alive #3*, was an intense physical theater piece created by the students, company, and faculty member/director Nana Shineflug. We caught up with Nana to find out more about The Chicago Moving Company and this piece in particular.

Nana began The Chicago Moving Company when she found herself frustrated that she couldn't find the kind of performance she wanted to be doing here in Chicago. "I had an impulse to do what it was I wanted. I couldn't leave Chicago to find it elsewhere, and I really wanted to dance. So I started my own company." She found some places to fund the shows and started performing throughout the city. "We did rep for a long time. I just got grants and had the will to do it."

Nana soon realized, while she was getting her masters in interdisciplinary arts here at Columbia, that what she really wanted to be doing was community outreach. So she applied for and received a grant from the Joyce Foundation for \$67,000. The Chicago Moving Company used this money to tour small towns in Illinois (towns with only 350-1,000 people) and worked with the communities of these places. They taught dance, created community works, and performed concerts. Their funding dried up after doing this for some time and they began trying to do the same thing with Chicago colleges. "I never thought that Columbia would be interested, but when I saw what Plasticene did last year I said, 'I want to do that!' The students here are so committed and open. I have taught at lots of schools, but here everyone is so real. I love teaching the students here. And then

when I saw the auditions last spring, I got even more excited because everyone came in so ready to create. I didn't have to encourage them to be creative because they already were."

Together with the inspiration and true stories of the cast members and some of her own work, Nana created *Alive #3*. She used the ideas and experiences close to college students, namely all the sides of sex and relationships. The cast started with all wearing red, and with the fun side of sex and relationships. Soon they explored the darker side and they all started to show up in black. The next section of the piece explored death. "A death of some kind must occur to emerge." They talked about physical death and then the other kinds of dying such as just parts of themselves dying. The last section of the show was where the color was all stripped away and the cast appeared in white. This section had a tale that taught about absorption and re-birth.

"This has been the most exciting experience I've had in a community project. All of the students were so creative, authentic, and sincere. I will always remember and love everyone who participated in this project."

In The Waiting Room

With Jeff Ginsberg, Director

The Waiting Room is a fantastical story centered around three women, an 18th century Chinese woman with bound feet, a Victorian English woman constricted in a tight corset with a history of hysteria, and a modern-day secretary whose plastic surgery included three breast augmentations. The play takes us in and out of the waiting room, allowing us to peer into these women's lives, the lives of the medical staff, and the businessmen who control them all. However, this quirky combination of drama and comedy creates a colorful milieu of imagery and emotion dealing with the human condition and how susceptible we are to the ideals created for us.

Jeff Ginsberg, director of *The Waiting Room*, spoke with us about why and how this beautiful play will be done in the New Studio space this December. "It's the issues dealing with the cost to men and women trying to replicate ad and media images," Jeff tells us. "It seems like we have a lot of choices, but in fact we (women in particular) are penalized for not conforming to the beauty myth whether it be at home, work, or the singles' bar. This play shows us the cost of having to conform to imagery created by Madison Avenue advertisement, or what Hollywood gives us. I recently saw a picture on the cover of *Premiere* magazine, and Michelle Pfeiffer was airbrushed until she no longer even looked human; she looked something like an android, and it is the pressure of Hollywood that makes people think they have to look like that. To be close to 50 and look like you're 30 is to say people shouldn't have marks of age on them that they get through living their lives." The women in this play have changed themselves to try to be the ideal of their period and area, and what we experience with them is the result of damaging beauty regimens.

The unfortunate result of our modern-day woman's heavy implants is breast cancer. This topic is close to Ginsberg because of people close to him who have been diagnosed with the disease. "I have known lots of people who got breast cancer through their environment, heredity, toxins

in their food," Jeff explains. "I have been there for the experience of women having to get mastectomies and seen the terror of the women dealing with it, and the hope of the cancer survivors."

One artist, a Columbia College faculty member named Hollis Sigler, inspired Ginsberg in particular. Along with having exhibits throughout the city, she illustrated the book *Words Against the Shifting Seasons: Women Against Breast Cancer*. Having breast cancer herself, her imagery was particularly complementary for this piece. "Her art is the inspiration for the artistic concept of *The Waiting Room*, she uses a colorful palate and a fantastical, whimsical way to depict her experience. Hollis' art uses feminine imagery such as clothes, vanities, mirrors, fountains, dress forms, and jewelry boxes and then alters the female iconography. The concept of this play uses the warm crayola colors, patterns, and whimsical shapes with the cleanliness and hard lines of a hospital environment, along with three centuries of design that are seen through the show. The audience will come in and actually feel like they are in a waiting room. The stage will be rounded, feminine, and there will be a flow in the movement with curtains and sliding wagons and platforms, which take the audience to the different locales as if they were on gurneys traveling through the labyrinth that these women go through."

The stellar design team for *The Waiting Room* includes artist-in residence John Murbach designing sets, student designer Steve Arnold designing lights, and student designer Matthew Osman designing costumes. The play will take place in the New Studio Theater which is in the 72 E. 11th Street building in the basement. Performances will be Wednesday, December 8th at 6:30; Thursday December 9th at 4pm; Friday, December 10th and Saturday December 11th at 7:30; Sunday December 12th at 7pm; Tuesday, December 14th at 11 am; Wednesday, December 15th at 2 pm; Thursday-Saturday December 16, 17 and 18 at 7:30; and Sunday, December 19th at 3 pm. Call (312) 344-6126 for reservations.

What's New with the Theater Dept. Faculty and Staff?

We here at Columbia know that you sat at home all summer just wondering what your favorite faculty and staff members are up to. So we have put together this listing just to appease your thirst for the knowlege.

Paul Amandes performed at the Goodman Theatre this past May in a workshop production of a new musical, *The Night of the Hunter*. This summer Paul directed *Hello Dali* for Theater on the Lake's summer series. *Hello Dali* has been picked-up by the Victory Gardens Theater for November and December 2000. This November Paul will be playing the role of Toad in *The Wind in the Willows* (directed by **Terry McCabe**) in Stevensville, Michigan. *The Little Humpback Horse*, with a Paul Amandes musical score, is to be produced next year at the University of Indiana, South Bend. Two plays written by Amandes, *Points of Arrival* and *Haunted by God* continue to tour the US and Canada.

Mary McDonald Badger designed lights this summer for The Cerqua Rivera Art Experience at the North Shore Performing Arts Center and *The Skin of our Teeth* at American Theater Company. Her upcoming light design projects include Nancy Teinowitz's Chicago Dance Festival and *Romeo and Juliet* for Loyola University.

Dale Calandra is still artistic director of Oak Park Festival Theater, which just finished its 25th anniversary season. This summer he'll direct *Twelfth Night*. He is the creative director of Center's professional school, "the training center for actors, directors and playwrights," and will appear as Mr. Fezziwig in Goodman Theatre's *A Christmas Carol* directed by **Henry Godinez**.

David Cromer is playing the Narrator and The Mysterious Man in this semester's mainstage production of *Into the Woods*. He is also playing the Elf in Roadworks' Christmas show, a 40 minute David Sedaris monologue called *The SantaLand Diaries*. David is directing a new play called *Orson's Shadow* by Austin Pendleton in the Steppenwolf Garage.

Doreen Feitelberg was recently asked to present a workshop to teachers who do drama with students at the Illinois Theatre Association. She taught "From Improvisation Into Storytelling," in which she demonstrated different methods of deconstructing stories and segmenting ideas for special focus.

Kirsten Fitzgerald recently received an After Dark Award for Outstanding Performance for her performance as Josie in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* at Circle Theater. She is currently working with Plasticene on *Come Like Shadows*, at the Chopin Theatre. She is also working at Thresholds doing drama and movement therapies with adults suffering from severe and persistent mental illnesses.

Henry Godinez directed *Macbeth* this summer for the Oak Park Festival Theatre. He was also awarded the Theatre Communication Group Alan Schneider Directing Award at the TCG national conference in San Francisco in July. He's directing Goodman's *A Christmas Carol* again this year and is then directing Regina Taylor in four monologues at the Goodman Studio.

Anne Libera is directing *Bunny, Bunny* for the Illinois Theatre Center, it opens at the end of October.

Anita Loomis appears weekly in *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* (30 plays in 60 minutes) with the Neo-Futurists, where she is a member. This fall she is directing *The Harm in Candor*, an original performance by Robbie Morgan at the Neo-Futurarium.

Brad Mott and **Susan Osborne-Mott** will be playing husband and wife in The Green Room's production of *Minutes from the Blue Route* directed by **Susan Padveen** and produced by **Jeff Ginsberg**. It will be running from November 19 to December 19 at the Athenaeum Theatre.

Tom Mula spent the summer working at Peninsula Players in Door county, WI, acting in *Blithe Spirit* and *It Runs in the Family* and directing *Lion in Winter*. His one man show, *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, based on his best-selling book, was produced at the Goodman last season. Tom received an After Dark Award for his performance, and the show received four Joseph Jefferson Nominations, including Principal Actor and Outstanding New Work. The show will be repeated this year, December 1-18. The audio version will be broadcast nationally on NPR for its third season this year.

Margaret L. Nelson recently was the touring stage manager and lighting designer for Jan Erkert and Dancer's visit to Montevideo, Uruguay. She was the lighting designer and production stage manager for Dance for Life. She also did lighting design for Robin Lake's Rough Dance at Northwestern and Jump Rhythm Jazz Project at the Dance Center of Columbia College. Coming up, she will be designing lights and acting as production stage manager for the 1999 Fall Dance Festival, designing lights for the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus 99-00 season, and designing for Columbia College's mainstage production of *Into the Woods*.

Clare Nolan did *Motherlode* this summer with the rest of the Sweat Girls. *Motherlode* was a piece which reflected on the nature of the mother/daughter dynamic and more personally on mothers as "full human beings." It was successfully produced by Lifeline and received a good response. This fall they are

performing at an oral history workshop in Naperville and they're recording a spoken word CD, due to be done by the end of the year.

Scott Olson spent the summer playing Lysander in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Le Beau in *As You Like It* for Equity Library Theatre. He will be directing *Hair* for Boxer Rebellion Theatre in March/April.

Susan Padveen is teaching theater classes for The Green Room and directing The Green Room's first production *Minutes from the Blue Route* this semester.

Sheldon Patinkin is on sabbatical this semester to work on his history of the American musical textbook on the Second City 40th anniversary coffee-table book. He'll be staging a Valentine's Day Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Concert, in April will direct O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* for the Irish Rep at Victory Gardens, starring John Mahoney and Marsha Mason.

Kathleen Perkins began her year as a Carnegie Scholar with a two week seminar at the Carnegie Foundation in Melno Park, CA and is now working on her research project on the role of self-evaluation in actor development.

Susan Philpot recently did dialect coaching for Trap Door's production of *Lebensraum*. She is presently coaching *The Crime of the Century* at Circle Theatre in Forest Park.

Brian Posen recently opened *Noises Off* at the Theatre Building (directed by Terry McCabe). He also wrote a comedic Opera called *Frankenbar* that went up at the Skybox stage of Second City. Brian performed in a show at Bailiwick this summer called *Earth Water Air Fire*. In January, he is mounting another musical at the skybox at Second City called *Piano Bars Last Call*.

Holly Quinn spent the month of September in residence with MASS Ensemble at The Field Museum. The group installed "Earth Harp 99, the World's Largest Stringed Instrument" on the northwest terrace of the Museum. Throughout the month, performances and workshops were open to the public. MASS Ensemble and the Earth Harp will travel to New York in October for performances and lectures at the World Financial Center's Winter Garden as part of their Arts and Events Program. MASS will also be performing at their studio in Pilsen for two weekends in November. Holly is also busy preparing for Dance Chicago 99 at the Athenaeum Theater. She will be on the Breaking Boundaries program with new work by XSIGHT! Performance Group and also on the New Expressions program with her piece "Swinesong".

Cecilie O'Reilly has been dialect coach for Steppenwolf's production *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and directed *Looking out of an Irish Window*, a program of essays, poems and songs of William Butler Yeats for the Chicago Humanities Festival. It

was performed on November 13th at The Chicago Historical Society. She also acted and sang in the performance.

Barbara Robertson is a resident artist again this year at the Court Theatre and will be performing Charlotte in their production of Stoppard's *The Real Thing* beginning in November. She is currently filming *Soul Survivors* for Artisan Pictures and can be seen for a brief moment in David Lynch's new film *The Straight Story*.

Catherine Slade will direct Danny Glover in a select readings of Leon Forrest's posthumous novellas at Northwestern's Pick-Staiger Hall. She is working on the script with Prof. John Calwelti, former chair of English at The University of Chicago. In December, Catherine will give a solo performance at the World Parliament of Religion in Cape Town, South Africa. The program, *Theater of the Imagination*, features myths, folk tales, poetry, and parables. Also, at present she is working on an adaptation of *Antigone* for the African-American Performance Lab. The *Antigone* project is a collaboration with Mary Ann McDonald of the Exiles Summer Theater Ltd. in Co. Cork, Ireland. Mary Ann teaches Greek Lit at UCSD. Catherine's essay on voice is being reviewed for publication for a new anthology of American Theater.

David Woolley is taking a holiday break after finishing 26 weeks of *Dirk and Guido: The Swordsmen*. He is staging fights for *Xena Live!* with About Face and greasy joan and *A View from the Bridge* with Raven Theater.



Be sure not to miss these
upcoming theater events!

Hambone, written by Javon Johnson this year's Theodore Ward Prize winner. Directed by Shirly Jo Finney. February 23-March 5.

Sueno, Jose Rivera's adaptation of *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderon de la Barca. Directed by Henry Godinez. March 16-26

She Ventures, He Wins written by Ariadne, Directed by Susan Padveen. April 12-22.